

Good afternoon to Montana's Senate Agriculture Committee. My name is Margaret A. (Peggy) Duezabou, and I vote in Senate District 42. Since 1969, I have trained and bred dogs for performance events including obedience, agility, tracking, and herding. I maintain a flock of wool sheep for fiber and for herding events as well as a flock of ducks. I speak in opposition to Senate Bill 0289.

First, I believe the onus for keeping poultry safe rests with poultry owners. I have lost chickens and ducks to weasel, coyote, fox, owl, skunk, and—yes—dogs. I have invested a great deal of time, energy, and resources to **Fence 'Em Out** (the predators) **AND Fence 'Em In** (the poultry). I've even had poultry fly *into* my dog yards. Ducks make sheep look really smart, yet common husbandry lets folks turn poultry loose to become attractive nuisances to any animal with prey drive.

Second, I'd like to point out something that is NOT part of SB 289, and that omission is a clear process for dog owners to defend their dogs. People generally understand that a dog 'caught in the act' of devastating livestock risks immediate punish, even death by gunshot. However, when that is not the case, I like to think accusers need to demonstrate a clear link between poultry crimes and their alleged perpetrators. For example, after an emotion-charged event—say a midnight poultry raid—ALL black-and-white Border Collies look very much alike. German Shepherds resemble coyotes. Loss of a highly trained dog deprives its owner of a fungible asset and, in some cases, a valued worker. Furthermore, I dare say many dogs are worth more than most poultry. There seems to be unevenness in the way SB 289 treats animal owners.

Finally, I own two dogs that were rehab projects. Each has dead poultry on its resume. One is now a very capable chore dog with sheep even when poultry is fluttering about. The other is a trustworthy livestock protection dog that oversees sheep and poultry. I am thankful that Animal Control agencies still offer a second chance to dogs with a history of youthful transgressions. I hope that will remain the case in Montana. I encourage and support regulatory schemes that leash, license, and confine dogs as well as ones that provide notification, fines, and reasonable remedies for dog owners and others.

Please reject SB 289 in its present form. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

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